STRIKING STORIES OF AFRICAN MISSIONS

EKANEM ESIN

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King and Queen of Jamestown, West Africa.

PRIMITIVE METHODIST
AFRICAN MISSIONS

Striking Stories of African Missions.

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FOREWORD.

MY object in this little volume is not to relate a story of Missionary travel and adventure, neither is it to describe the manners and customs of the tribes among whom I have laboured, but to show how the simple story of the Cross has gripped dark hearts, liberating them from the thralldom of sin, and lifting them into the light and liberty of the children of God.

I have dipped into my journal at random and taken from it incidents here and there, which I considered would be most useful for my present purpose. If the publication of these incidents results in a deepened interest in Missionary work, and an intenser enthusiasm and passion for the salvation of the heathen, I shall be amply repaid for all the toil, the struggles, the suffering, and sacrifices, I have made and endured as a pioneer Missionary for my beloved Church.

T. S.

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Striking Stories of African Missions.

CHAPTER I.

VALEDICTORY SERVICE.

OUR Church excels in giving its Missionaries a splendid send-off. Exeter Hall and its sea of faces will ever live with me as a most heartening and inspiring memory. The impassioned eloquence of our Missionary Secretary, the beautiful and fervent prayer of our Connexional Editor, commending us to God, the hearty handshake of loyal Primitive Methodists, made one feel strong to do exploits.

The party consisted of Rev. F. and Mrs. Pickering, and Rev. W. Chapman, leaving for Central Africa, and Mrs. Stones and myself for the West Coast. We little knew then what awaited us in the dark land, but we did know we were bearing away with us the sympathy, the prayers, and the well-wishes of hundreds whose hearts were bound together by the common bonds of Christian fellowship and love.

OUR DEBT TO OTHERS.

Let me gratefully recognise the debt we owe on the West Coast of Africa to the Presbyterian Mission of Old Calabar. Some of our earliest members came to us from that mission, and a large number of residents of Archibongville had come into contact directly or indirectly with its work. We made use of their native hymnal and translations, and received innumerable kindnesses from the Missionaries themselves. Whenever we were at Calabar their doors were open to us, and we were always hospitably entertained. Old Daddy Anderson, as the people loved to call him, a pioneer of that mission, was a remarkable man; for nearly half a century he toiled in that inhospitable climate and laid the foundations of a most successful mission. He came home to spend the quiet evening of his days in bonnie Scotland, the land of his birth, but Africa was in his blood and he heard his people calling him back. Although over 80 years of age, he set out for the scenes of his early toils and triumphs. The writer was in Calabar when he landed, and will never forget the excitement of that memorable day. The natives crowded down to the beach in hundreds, shouting, "Our father has come back," "Our father has come back." They sang him up to the Mission Hill, and stood for hours surrounding the Mission House weeping with joy, and struggling to get a grip of the old man's hand. He only lingered for a few months, and then he was not, for God took him. In the English cemetery from which one gets a splendid view of the Calabar river and town, the stranger

will notice a tombstone which covers the spot where lie buried the remains of Daddy Anderson and his wife. His wish was granted, he sleeps among his beloved people, and the memory of his life is as ointment poured forth.

ON THE THRESHOLD.

Our introduction to Mission work was strange, and yet in many respects pleasant. Prince Archibong placed his launch at our disposal, and we started down the Calabar River on a Saturday morning about 11.30 for Archibongville. A journey which should have taken about five hours, occupied over twelve. All told we numbered six in the launch, Mrs. Stones and myself and four natives. Drifting out of our course near the mouth of the river we settled on a sandbank, and had to remain until the return of the tide liberated us. The darkness of the tropics settled upon us, and things looked serious, but the waters lifted us and soon we were picking our way through a narrow creak. Then a tornado with its incessant flashes of lightning, peals of thunder, and deluge of rain engulfed us, and we sat in fear and trembling. The tornado passed, followed by a calm, then all at once from the other end of the launch, came singing. The natives had not spoken to us throughout the day and we did not know whether they were friendly or otherwise, but the singing convinced us they were people of the mission, for they sang the well-known hymn in fairly good English—"Nearer, my God, to Thee." We joined in, and

for the remainder of the journey that launch became to us a sanctuary, and the hymn a beautifully answered prayer. Far away from home, just entering on a new experience, on an African river at midnight, we felt an uplifting of the soul. This little incident convinced us that the work of our predecessor was bearing precious fruit.

SAVED TO SERVE.

Enthusiastic services and crowded congregations were the order of the day. We never had to complain of empty seats. To attend a week night Class Meeting was a rare treat. No person thought of missing his Class except in case of extreme sickness, and every member contributed according to his means. We had the widow's mite as well as the rich chief's portion. A network of little Missions sprang up around our centre. On the Yam farms in the bush were settled families who could not always get into the town, but these were not forgotten. As it is all the world over when a man finds Christ, he wants others to know about it, so our Members had a burning zeal to speak about the Love of God to their less favoured brothers and sisters. I would miss some of them on a Sunday morning from the service, and on making enquiries, I found that very early they had taken their Efik Bibles and hymn books, and either by canoe down the river, or on foot by land, they had sought out these families and read to them, and sang to them the Gospel of God's grace.

A LAD O' PAIRTS.

A few days after our arrival at Archibongville, a native mother came to the Mission House, leading by the hand a small boy, she said she could not do anything with him, he was always talking about Mission man and his Book, would we take him into our home and let him live with us. We learnt afterwards that my predecessor had employed him in the Mission as a houseboy. Going back to live "native fashion" evidently had not suited him, he seemed a bundle of skin and bones, and was suffering from "craw-craw,"—but what impressed us was the shape of his head, and his large shining eyes. We decided to take him in, and from that day through the intervening years we never ceased to pray that God would make an Evangelist of him. With better food and treatment than he had been accustomed to receive, he soon developed into a sturdy and plump little fellow. Once he caught a severe chill, which brought on fever with a high temperature. Mrs. Stones tenderly nursed him through his illness, and his mother coming one day and finding him on the road to recovery, was so thankful, she gave vent to her feelings by throwing her arms round the neck of his nurse and kissing her. He turned out an exceptional lad in every sense of the word. We never knew him tell an untruth, we never saw him in a temper, we never heard him say an unkind word, we never knew him neglect his lessons. He always acted as a go-between when strife broke out among the other children. He filled the role of arbitrator in their quarrels, they looked up to him as leader, and

accepted his decision on any point, as they would have accepted the word of the missionary. He often played the part of nurse to our little girl and was gentle and tender as a mother. We left him in the hands of our successor, and each Missionary following moulded his young life for God. To-day the people come to him from all quarters with their troubles and palavers, he has the influence of a King. But, better still, he has fulfilled the high hopes we entertained of him in those early days. He is a minister of our Connexion,—his name is John Enang Gill.

FAMILY PRAYERS.

Some of our members adopted the practice of Family Prayers. The West Coast native is imitative, and this faculty is not lost when he becomes a Christian. He must be like the Missionary, so every evening he gathers his family around him to read God's Word, and sing and pray. Not infrequently would an individual walking through the town in the evening, hear proceeding from some of the compounds the bell calling to evening prayer, or the singing of familiar Church hymns.

Every Sabbath evening after service the children of the Mission House would hold their little Meetings sometimes in the kitchen, at other times in the compound of the chiefs. They sing, pray round and sing again. Afterwards in turn they recite as much as they can remember of the Sermon. All have to take part, and the unfortunate one who cannot recall to mind what the preacher has said

received a mild thrashing. It did not often happen, however, that they had to resort to corporal punishment.

OPENING OF JAMESTOWN MISSION.

In going out to West Africa for my first term of service, I had the old objection to Mission work thrust at me by the Trader, until I grew weary of it :—"These Africans do not want the gospel. they tell us so, what they want is gin, rum, spirits, and cloth." How one can afford to smile now over this childish talk. A very short experience among the natives convinced us they did want the Gospel, they were crying for the Gospel, holding out both hands for the Gospel. Invitations came pouring in from all quarters asking us to take possession of large centres in the name of Christ. Among them is the following letter, which I immediately forwarded to our Missionary Committee :—

"Jamestown,
Mbo River,
February 18th, 1896.

To Reverend T. Stones, Esquire.
Sir,

I, the undersigned, King James Egbo Bassey I. do hereby beg to inform your Primitive Methodist Committees or Missionaries to choose my place here, as I have already started school here myself, many nations here all about and a healthy place mainland or a place close the sea nearly Tom Shot

Point. The upper part or up river were numerable. Mbo tribes around, etc., etc.

I beg to remain, Sir,

Your humble and obedient servant,

(Signed) KING JAMES EGBO BASSEY I.

I was specially interested in this invitation as there had been whisperings at Calabar among the Government officials that Archibongville was to be ceded over to the Germans, and in that case we should be without a centre on the Mainland.

Subsequent events have proved that my suspicions were well founded. I seized the first opportunity to visit King James. On Wednesday morning, March 4th, 1896, I set out by boat and after experiencing a rough voyage, arrived there at six in the evening. Many of the natives had gathered together on the beach and were so pleased that they would have carried me into the town. My first impressions of the King were favourable. He had a fine appearance, dressed like an Englishman and spoke the English language fairly well. He was so overjoyed at my presence that he could not find words to express himself. I dined with him at 8 p.m. and after he had summoned the people I conducted a religious service in what was the Egbo Meeting House.* It was crowded with attentive listeners. The following morning the natives were again assembled for prayers at seven. The King specially desired me to come again for the following Sunday, and when I raised objections on account

* For explanation of Egbo see Rev. W. J. Ward's book—*In and Around the Oron Country*, Chapter IV.

of our old Mission boat being unseaworthy, he placed at our disposal his new boat splendidly fitted out with every convenience. The Sunday's Services were long remembered. Four times that day to large crowds I pressed home the old truth of God's great love in Jesus Christ. I asked him why he preferred the Primitive Methodists, and he gave me the significant answer, that the Governor of Calabar had spoken favourably of our work at Archibongville, and also that he had visited the Island of Fernando Po and had seen the good work carried on there by our Missionaries, and he said, "I came to the conclusion that if you were doing such a good work at Archibongville, and such a good work at Fernando Po, I wanted you to start a good work among my people, so I open all my territory to you. I will build you a church at my own expense," which he did.

The opening services of that Church marked an epoch in my life. A feast was prepared for all the residents of the town, ducks, goats, and cows were killed; tables were placed in the Church and loaded with plenty and to spare, but what stands out in my memory was the procession from the Palace to the Church. A Bible and Hymn Book were carried in the forefront by a servant of the King, then came the Missionary followed by the King and Queen gorgeously apparelled, and after them the chiefs, and then the crowd. We sang, "Canaan, O Canaan," and concluded a memorable day with an address and a Prayer Meeting. Since then Jamestown has become the centre for the training of Native girls, and is dear to the hearts of thousands in the Homeland, as the place associ-

ated with the labours of that noble heroine, Miss Dods, who sacrificed her life in seeking to train the young life for God.

HOISTING THE WHITE FLAG.

When it was finally decided to open a Mission at Jamestown, I saw the King and said to him, "King, they tell me you hold large markets in this town, and sometimes those markets fall on the Sabbath day. For the future those markets must be discontinued on God's day, as it must be set aside for Divine worship. "But," says the King, "How are the people to know it is the Sabbath, many of them come from other towns both by water and by land." He thought for a minute and then made the following suggestion. "This is what we will do. We will erect a flag-staff near the church and have a flag hoisted, and I will tell the people next time market is held that for the future when they see the flag floating over the church, they will know it is the Sabbath, and there will be no market held on that day." I thought this a very good suggestion. Mrs. Stones made a white flag and cut out some red letters and stitched them on it, signifying "Jesus Only." The red letters on the white background showed distinctly. For over three months as every Sabbath dawned the white flag floated over the House of Prayer. There was no noise or excitement such as prevailed on market days. The only sounds to be heard were those of prayer and praise that came from the Church.

ROYAL PROCLAMATIONS.

King James was eccentric in much that he did, but sometimes his eccentricities revealed his deep interest in our Mission work. On the completion of the first Church in his town, he sent out two proclamations. One was that those who attended the Church on the Sabbath must take or send their stools there on the Saturday. As the Church had been hurriedly built we had not been able to accommodate the people with seats, they were compelled to bring their own, and he would not allow them to carry them on the Sunday. Sometimes when we have arrived there on the Saturday for the Sunday Services, it has been an interesting sight to see the children running off with their parents' stools to the Church and striving to secure a good position for Daddy or Mammy on the Sabbath. The other proclamation was that those who wanted water from the springs for Sunday's consumption must carry it on the Saturday. The springs were in the vicinity of the Church, and to carry it into the town it was necessary to pass by the Church door. Because of this he forbade the carrying of water as it would interfere with the services and Sabbath day observance. What a lesson for us. Here is a King just emerging from the darkest night of heathenism, forbidding his people to carry God's pure water on the Sabbath, and yet in this 20th century in Christian England we do not scruple to send our boys and girls to the Public House for beer, while the Sabbath bells are ringing. We go to teach the Africans, they oftentimes teach us.

A GOOD OLD CHIEF.

One of the main factors in the success and development of Missionary work has been the friendly attitude maintained towards it by the Kings, Princes, and Chiefs, among whom the Missionary has laboured. To no portion of the Mission Field do these words more strongly apply than to our mainland missions. In the early days the influence of those in authority was all on the side of our work. Ekanam Esin was one of the best friends a Missionary could have, through him our Mission became known for miles around. As often as possible services were conducted in his town on the Sabbath, and when neither the Missionary nor his helpers could attend, the Chief conducted them himself. It was no uncommon experience on a week day evening to see him with an open Efik Bible sitting among a crowd of his people reading to them. On one occasion during a visit I paid him he recited a grievance which had been made by a few of his men who were not on terms of the most intimate friendship with the Mission people. Several valuable cows had died and no reason could be assigned for their death, but to find a way out of the difficulty they concocted a story that Christianity was killing his cows, and unless he went back to the old customs, offered sacrifices, and dismissed the Mission people, all the cows would die. After making strict enquiries he found that these very men had been giving the cows poisonous vegetables from the bush to create suspicion against the Missionary.

He has often acted the part of a brother and a

Christian towards our workers. It was he who came to our assistance when additional land was needed at Archibongville on which to erect a new Mission house, and gave us as much as we required. He was one of the few who spoke of our work to King James and paved the way for the opening of Jamestown. His men and canoe were at our disposal when the Missionary was prostrated by a terrible fever. He had him conveyed to Calabar Hospital, and often afterwards with the solicitude of a father would send down boys to the Mission House making enquiries about the sick Missionary. He was not a member of the Mission, and this was a great grief that darkened his latter days. Long before the Missionary came to his district he had married wives from important and neighbouring tribes. One day he opened his heart to me. "I am getting old, and I no want trouble now. Suppose I put away them wives, and I no sabe which to put away, I love them all, but suppose I put them away, then other tribes come and make big war, and perhaps all my people go die." No greater insult could be offered to a tribe than for a chief to put away a wife belonging to that tribe. Ekanam Esin was a man of peace,—had he been twenty years younger he would have made the sacrifice and risked the consequences. He died soon after my return, but I shall always cherish memories of his kindness, his generosity, and his warm and continued friendship. Two of his children we received into the Mission House, and he bore the expense of their food, books, and clothing.

BAPTISM SUNDAY.

Baptism Sunday was a great day with us. The Mission people would look forward to it for weeks, and we were always sure of a crowd. It was a beautiful custom which originated with the Presbyterian Mission at Old Calabar, that the candidates for Baptism should come dressed in white, the women in white drill dresses, the men in white drill suits. Some of them being poor would be compelled to put by a little each week in order to purchase the necessary equipment. Among the last batch I baptized was a slave boy, and he came to me with his heart breaking because he had not been able to get the complete outfit. "Massa," he said, "I get them fine suit, but I no get shoe, and I no fit for come for them Baptism." I gave him a pair of white canvas shoes, and no words of mine are adequate enough to convey the thanks he expressed in speech and gesture. I felt more than repaid for the loss of the shoes.

It is an impressive service, and even now one loves to linger over the seasons of refreshing which came to one's own soul whilst administering the sacred rite to those simple and yet sincere followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. At the close of the service, a procession was formed with the new members in the centre, and the people sang them home. Some of the happiest periods in my life have been those when standing by the Church door, I have watched the huge procession wending its way into the town visiting first one hut and then another until all the candidates were in their homes. And how these people can sing. They would put

many a Primitive Methodist congregation at home in the shade by the style in which they sing to the old tunes such old hymns as :—" O happy day that fixed my choice," "Canaan, O Canaan," " Oh, that will be joyful," etc.

BEGINNINGS OF TRAINING INSTITUTE.

It is an education as well as an interesting study to trace the development of Institutions which have in them such great powers of good, back to their beginnings, and ascertain the causes which led to their birth. I do not wish to take any credit to myself for the Oron Training Institute, as it was founded after my return, but the incentives which led to its formation are to be discovered in the very early days of our Mainland Mission. Numerous requests came from Kings, Princes and Chiefs that we should take their children into the Mission House and give them an English training, just the same as we would give to our boys and girls. It was impossible to grant all these requests, as we had no accommodation, but we accepted some at different times until the number totalled nine. The parents were willing to pay a small sum, and we isolated them as much as possible from their native environment, giving them special teaching in addition to what they received in the public school during school hours.

Revs. W. J. Ward and R. Banham ably continued the work after our departure and some of the boys and girls of those early days, grown up now, but still with us, are rendering splendid service at our different Mission centres. The Oron Train-

ing Institute and the Jamestown School for Girls are two of the most Christlike ventures we have made in our Mission work, and whilst we are reaping advantages from them now, the years to come will alone reveal the richness and abundance of the harvest that must spring from all our sowing. The West Coast has a treacherous climate for Europeans, and to develop extensively with workers from home would involve a tremendous sacrifice in valuable lives. What dynamic power for transmitting the light of heaven is stored in these youthful centres of learning it is impossible to tell, but the present augurs well for a brilliant future for our Church in that portion of the Mission Field.

A CITY OF REFUGE.

It was the Sabbath. A calm, peaceful Sabbath evening. The day had been intensely hot, a brazen faced sun had looked straight down upon us, but was now fast sinking in the West as in a sea of blood. A Chief lay dying. The previous day he had fallen from a scaffold used in the erection of a new house for the Prince, and from the fall had received severe internal injuries. He was a scholar in our Sabbath School, and gave hopes of becoming a good man, he had promised to join the Catechism Class, put away his wives and ultimately to become a Member of our Church. But there he now lay on the borderland. We had just concluded our last service for the day when a messenger from the Prince desired us to visit the dying Chief. A few minutes and we were standing over him watching his painful breathing, he was unconscious, the

shadow of death was resting upon him, the end was near. It was a tragic death bed scene was his. His bed, if such we could call it, was only a native mat upon the sandy floor, there was no covering for his naked body. Around him sat his wives wiping off the death sweat, and with piteous pleadings endeavouring to recall the love look to his eye ; at his back a huge fire was burning, and by the aid of its light we could see in the background his friends and slaves squatting in gloomy silence. The heat of the place was almost unbearable, and we could have wished ourselves in the open air, but then we remembered the words of our Saviour—"Comfort all that mourn," so amid the foul stench of that miserable abode, we carried out the Master's command.

On the dying man's arms were large deep gashes made with a sharp knife, and in which there had been rubbed a quantity of pepper. Upon enquiry we learnt this had been done to charm away the evil spirits and make him well. Bad as we expected to find the poor heathen in this dark land, we were not prepared for such superstition. He did not recover consciousness, and the following Tuesday passed away in great agony. He was buried in his own hut, after the native fashion, and for a week the town was full of wild merriment and noise. On Tuesday evening we had retired to rest, but were roused up by loud knockings at the door ; we opened it in haste and there saw a female almost frantic with grief. She told us as best she could they wanted to murder her and throw her body into the Chief's grave. This has been an old custom always kept up by the natives on the

death of an important chief, recently it had been forbidden by the Consul, but I was informed on good authority it was still practised in secret. The poor woman remained at the Mission, it was indeed a City of Refuge for her, and her would-be murderers were baffled.

A HEATHEN SOLOMON.

It was Prince Archibong who invited the Rev. R. Fairley to open a Mission in his town after the Government representative at Cameroons had informed him that we should not be allowed to carry on any kind of Mission work in German territory. He built us a Church and encouraged attendance at the Church services by prohibiting any manual labour on the Lord's day. He came also himself and the writer has vivid recollections of the Royal Procession as it approached within view of the Church. First came an attendant carrying the Prince's chair and table, followed by another bearing his Bible and hymn book, then another perspiring with his collection money, which consisted of rods and wires, then came the Prince raised on the shoulders of a strong slave, and bringing up the rear, was a tall man holding above him a large umbrella. Inside the Church his manner was that of an ordinary individual, he would often allow his slaves to read with him in his Efik Bible the lessons for the day. Our Missionary Committee presented him with an English copy of the Bible, of which he was very proud. He studied that Bible and knew it, and the remarkable knowledge which some of our people have of their Bible has surprised the Missionary.

It is said that old Mamma Job of St. Isabel knew her Bible from cover to cover, and on one occasion during service, the Missionary attempting to quote Scripture, made a slight error, and she corrected him from the pew and told him he ought to know better. The Prince, though not a christian, knew his Bible. Visiting the palace one day I found him in one of his happy moods ; the conversation turned on a favourite topic of his, viz. : The Prince of Wales and all the Royal Family. Fearing lest questions should be asked I could not answer—for my knowledge of Royalty was not extensive—I put the question to him, “ Prince, why is it that you have so many wives, why do you not conform to English fashion and have only one wife ? ” He rose from his chair, went to one of his rooms and brought out his Bible ; turning over the leaves he came to the passage, “ And Solomon had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines.” He was closing the book, but I said, “ Read on Prince.” He would not finish the verse, but turned to me and said, “ And Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived.” Whether he based the great King’s wisdom on the number of wives and concubines he had, I am not prepared to say. He died in the prime of life, when he should have been at his best. My successor informed me that sometime before his death he lost that interest in Missionary work he originally had shown, and took to excessive drinking, which killed him.

ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER.

The season had been a bad one for Yams, and there was almost a famine in the town and district.

We had run short at the Mission House. We visited the farm of the one Chief who had any to sell, but he asked such an exorbitant price that we refused to buy. We questioned him as to why he asked a higher price from us than he would ask in the market, and he replied, "In the market I sell to Calabar men, and Calabar man be my brother, white man no be my brother." "Very well," I replied, and left him. A few days afterwards he came up to the Mission House and begged me to give him a little tar to put on some posts he was using in the construction of a new house. I told him that Calabar man no be my brother, and he remembered his own words of a few days previous. "Massa," he said, "I be sorry too much for them bad words, I say, they no be true. White man come out and he bring us plenty fine cloth and other fine thing. Missionary come out and he tell us about God and teach us to read them Book, we like him too much, he be our brother." "Very well," I said, "you say white man be your brother, I say Calabar man be my brother," and after preaching to him a little sermon on the brotherhood of man, I gave him what he asked for. On reaching his home he despatched two of his slaves to the Mission House, and they came loaded with Yams for his brother the Missionary. He was the Chief who presented us with a fine big fowl, just after our arrival. We thanked him heartily for the gift, little suspecting that he would be asking us in the same week for the loan of Five Pounds so that he might do some trading up the river, he was a strong believer in the old proverb, "One good turn deserves another."

GOSPEL AND GUN.

A deputation had been appointed consisting of English and German officers, to fix the boundary between English and German territory. The son of Ekanan Esin, a lad of about 16 years, was asked to accompany the expedition to act as interpreter to the Efik tribe. Just before the expedition set out he came to see me. It was my last Sunday at the Mission. I was returning home at the end of the week on furlough. When he had informed me that his father had decided to allow him to go, I told him of the massacre of the white men which had happened just before at Benin, and asked him if he was taking a gun with him. He put his hand into his jacket pocket and pulled out a small English copy of St. John's Gospel, and said—"This is my gun, massa, I want no other gun but this." The lad was going far away from his home among hostile and cannibal tribes, feeling that a more powerful weapon than powder and shot was the Word of God. It was a simple statement, and he did not realize what a fundamental truth his words contained. But it is a lesson we need to drive home to-day. A Missionary, and not a soldier, is a nation's best asset. Though he goes out primarily as the pioneer of the Cross, he is the best pioneer of civilization and commerce, and countries have been opened out by him and wealth tapped which have largely made our nation what it is to-day. A recognition of this fact is gradually dawning upon the leaders of our national life, as evidenced in the changed attitude towards Mission work to-day, in contrast with that of fifty years ago.

THE CHILDREN'S LOVE TOKEN.

We left the Mission under a heavy cloud. The day before we started for the Coast to catch the steamer that was to bring us home we laid the remains of our little girl, Dorothy, in the grave. She was our first-born, and the only white child the natives had ever seen. Naturally she was an object of curiosity, they brought her presents of fowls and yams, and when we took her to the services and she smiled at their black faces their excitement knew no bounds. The boys and girls of the Mission loved her. At the age of 18 months she contracted a severe attack of malarial fever, and try as we would we could not reduce her temperature. She died in the night, and early the following morning when the news spread, the children of the Mission unknown to us, wandered off into the bush and gathered fresh wild flowers, and they came back with their little naked bodies almost hidden behind them. Some of these they laid on the coffin we had made for her, the others they carried with them to the grave and threw them in as a last token of love for their little playmate. A wooden cross was erected at the head of the grave, and when the children were asked what should be written on it, they said, "Dorothy ke Jesus," which means, "Dorothy with Jesus." The sorrow of the children and the tribute of the flowers brought home to me the fact that wherever you find men and women and boys and girls, whether their skins be white or whether they be coloured, you find them in possession of noble feelings which the preaching of Jesus Christ can arouse.

Down in the human heart,
Crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore.
Touched by a loving hand,
Wakened by kindness,
Chords that were broken
Will vibrate once more.

A SACRIFICE OF BLOOD.

St. Paul, the greatest Missionary, had a wonderful power in adapting himself to the circumstances and conditions of the people by whom he was surrounded. He became all things to all men. Before the Jews he was a Jew, he took hold of the Mosaic Law and economy, and showed how they were fulfilled in the coming of the Christ. Among the Gentiles he preached a full, free and present salvation, ignoring all distinctions of class and creed he proclaimed the universality of redemption, and the brotherhood of man. In the centre of Greek learning with the representatives of Greek art, literature, and philosophy around him he quoted Greek poetry. As he walked through the city of Athens his indignation burned as a flame as he saw the idols and deities set up at every point of vantage, but when his eye rested on a certain altar with the inscription, "To the unknown God"—a sudden inspiration seized him. Here was a people acknowledging the existence of a great supreme Being. He would make that his text and prove by his argument that Jesus Christ had come to reveal this God and make him known to the children of men, and so he preached to them Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and if at first it

was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, it afterwards proved to be to them that believed, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Why some Missionaries and teachers have failed among strange people has been because they have lacked this power of adaptation, and have been indiscreet on the very threshold of their work in attacking the ancient faiths of the tribes around them, instead of looking out for gleams of truth from which to preach the Gospel of salvation through the sacrifice of Christ. The sacrificial element holds a prominent position in the religion of the people on the West Coast. I witnessed soon after my arrival a strange ceremony. The people of the town were called to a great sacrifice. In the centre of the town a stake was placed in the ground, and hanging upon it were strips of white calico and rushes from the river, a goat was brought and killed and its blood mingled with the sand at the foot of the pole, a pure white chicken was waved over the heads of the people, then one of the chiefs dipping his fingers in the blood of the goat made the mark of a cross on the breast and forehead of each of the Chiefs present, at the same time using words equivalent to these—"You shall live long and have much happiness." I was a silent spectator of this solemn rite, and it occurred to me, that here was a means of illustrating to them the mystery of the gospel of Jesus, Who offered Himself a sacrifice once for all for the sins of the whole world. We cannot overturn and abolish in a few months superstitions which have been practised for generations, but by making most of the resemblances between these ancient faiths

First batch of Students from San Carlos Bay.

John Petty Sogo and his wife.

First Church and Flagstaff, Jamestown, West Africa.

First P.M. Church, Zambesi Valley.

and the Christian religion, we can by a gradual process eliminate that which is degrading and superstitious and supplant it with the pure and undefiled religion of the New Testament.

THE FIERY ORDEAL.

Casting lots and other ordeals were things of common occurrence, and consequently many innocent persons were accused of crime and suffered severe punishments. Tiger cats were very numerous in the bush, and in the breeding season became very bold, at night they would enter the town, steal the goats, ducks and fowl and even kill the cows of the people. Matters became desperate on one occasion and suspicions were aroused that someone possessed the tiger bone. Now the tiger bone is situated in the chest, and anyone in possession of this tiger bone has an influence over the tiger, so, if any animosity existed towards any member of another family, this tiger bone individual could make him suffer through the tiger. The fiery ordeal was resorted to by command of the Prince and Chiefs. to get to know who it was that was causing the present mischief. A fire was made in an open space, and over it was placed a large iron pot filled with palm oil. A man with a huge snail shell attached to a stick stood by the side of the pot and his duties were to pour the boiling oil on the hands of the representative of every family in the town and district adjoining. The one who had the oil poured over his hands was compelled to wash off the oil and then appear before the head Chief who

sat as judge. If no marks were detected on the hands, he was declared innocent. This ordeal was kept up for three days. I was a spectator part of the first day, I went down again on the third day and waited until the last representative was brought. He was an old man and belonged to one of the better class families. The judge, after a careful inspection of his hands, thought he could discern marks and pronounced him guilty. I thought it time to interfere, and without appearing to dictate, I said to the chief,—“Chief, I no like them custom, he no be good, suppose I go for them pot and get them oil for my hands there be plenty marks.” The Chief immediately replied,—“No, Massa, them tiger-bone no live for white man, he only live for black man.” I made several enquiries to ascertain if possible what had become of the old man, but to no purpose, in some mysterious way he was put out of existence, and by this means they thought they had rid themselves of the tiger scare. This occurred in the early days of our Mainland Mission, and is the only instance of its kind that came under my notice.

A BED IN THE BUSH.

It is a belief prevalent among the natives that sometimes the souls of the departed return to the old haunts and spend a happy season amid the scenes and surroundings of former days, so after a Chief dies they make him a bed in the bush, and thus provide sleeping accommodation for him during his visit. One was constructed within a few paces of the Mission House ; draped curtains

were hung round it, it was fitted up inside with rugs, blankets and pillows. All the belongings of the Chief are scattered round it. It is not taken down but left to rot and disappear in its own good time. We had some very heavy rains and tornadoes within a day or so after it had been erected, and it grieved us to see the dilapidated condition of the soul's temporary resting place. Everything was saturated with the rain, and as the sun again made his appearance, the ants invaded it and set earnestly to work with a most cruel purpose and shortly every vestige of it had disappeared.

MAKING CONFESSION.

A good feature and one certainly to be admired among those in the habit of attending Church is the readiness with which they make confession to the Missionary for any little sins they have in haste or anger committed. The white man will nurse his sins and try for a long time to hide them even from his closest friends ; not so the native, the burden seems too heavy, and one way of removing it or making it lighter is to seek the advice or counsel of the Missionary. A Member of our Church had received great provocation at the hands of a neighbouring Chief, and in his haste had uttered what is considered among them a bad word—equivalent to pronouncing a curse upon him. I paid him a visit not knowing of this, but his restless attitude and forlorn expression convinced me that something had gone wrong and he wished to make some revelation to me. We had only been talking together a few minutes when he told all, ex-

pressed his sorrow and asked advice. We knelt down together and made it a matter of prayer. His earnest appeal to God for forgiveness touched me deeply, and when we rose from our knees he felt greatly relieved. A donation was sent to the mission House as a special thank-offering to God for His great goodness.

IN PERILS OF WATERS.

In crossing from Archibongville to Jamestown, we often experienced very rough weather and heavy seas. We started one bright morning in May, the Prince, with his usual generosity, lent us his launch ; everything went well until about 11 a.m. when the skies darkened and a strong breeze sprang up. In a very short time the sea was lashed into fury, and the waves broke over the launch drenching us to the skin and almost putting out the fire. We had drifted into the shallows and the breakers were tremendous, we expected every minute to find a watery grave ; the men on the launch were paralysed with fear and entirely helpless. Rushing to the wheel I headed for Calabar and we were soon in deep water again. The storm subsided, and we landed at Jamestown at 2 p.m. In the evening of the same day a terrific tornado visited us, and lifted launch and anchor high up on the sandy beach, and as the tide was on the ebb we had to secure the launch and keep it in position until the return of the waters. This knockabout day brought on my first attack of fever. For three days I was prostrated, and the Queen, a good and gentle soul, nursed me back to health.

SCARING AWAY DISEASE.

At the end of the rainy season small pox visited the town, and the people fearing lest it should work sad havoc among them, set about driving it away. A long procession of women was formed, each one bearing branches of trees. They marched in single file round the town singing as they went in a melancholy strain, this was broken at intervals by a tremendous clapping of hands. For several days this was kept up, on the last day the procession advanced some distance into the bush carrying, as was supposed, the last remnants of the disease with it. The branches were thrown down and the women rushed back into the town. Curiously enough the disease died out, and its departure was, of course, attributed to the above proceedings.

SCARECROWS.

Here and there on the river brink the traveller can see something which reminds him of the scarecrows often seen in our English gardens and cornfields. When a native meets his death by drowning, his cloth and other valuables are brought as near to the fatal spot as possible and hung up on tree stumps or arranged in order on the sands. Why this is done, we cannot say, but the natives shrink from appropriating anything belonging to a dead man, so it may be his relatives or friends place them there thinking it will not be difficult for him to find them should he desire them in the other world.

EXHIBITION OF INFANTS.

An ancient custom is kept up by some of the well-to-do families of the Calabar people, viz., the exhibition of infants. When a child has cut all its first set of teeth, it is sent round to the different compounds in charge of an older girl. A small crown is placed on its head, its face and the front part of the head are painted and figured in Calabash style, and it has small brass rings round the legs just above the ankles, three or four rings of beautiful coloured beads round the loins. Wherever it goes it is praised and patted and sent away with so many wires or rods according to the position of the family. When on a visit to Jamestown, as I was having chop with the King, two very fine children came to the palace for exhibition. The King presented them with a cow. I gave them a new silver coin each. By the time all the compounds have been visited, several pounds' worth of gifts are obtained. In some cases the exhibition does not take place until the children are nine or ten years of age.

ILLUSTRATING TRUTH.

The top of the Cameroon's Peak could be seen from the Mission Town on specially clear days, under a mantle of snow, but the natives looked upon it as a bad omen. They said the god of the mountain was angry with them and he had spread a great white sheet over it and was hiding there, and would not come out because the people had made him angry. I tried to convince them that it

was not a white sheet, but it was white rain, but my words had no meaning for them, as they had never seen snow, or what I called white rain. One day I was down on the beach and a good number of our people were there preparing for the market. I said to them,—“ You see them river, well suppose them river be for white man’s country, and it be cold too much, them water that live for top he go get hard and you fit walk on him, you no want canoe for get for them other side, but you fit walk for top of them water.” One of them replied,—“ Massa, we believe plenty thing you tell us, but them word you tell us now he be strong too much.” Happening one day to take the children of the Mission House down to Rio Del Rey we saw a large steamer in the river unloading cargo, it had come direct from home. They had never seen such a fine boat before. I took them on board and obtained permission from the Captain to take them over it. We went down into the Saloon and I ordered a few bottles of lemonade. The Steward said, “ We have some ice on board if you would care for some.” I said I should be very pleased. He brought a few pieces on a plate. I said to Sammy, one of the boys, “ Sammy, come here, I get good thing for you.” Sammy came. I said “ Open them mouth, Sammy,” and before he knew what I was doing I had a piece of ice in his mouth, but it was soon out, for Sammy was scared, and off he ran and the others after him down the steps of the steamer and into the Mission boat. I had the greatest difficulty in persuading them to come back, but I succeeded at last. Then I said to them, “ You sabe them time we live for beach, and I tell

you about them hard water." "Yes, we Sabe, Massa." "Well, this be them hard water, and suppose you let him stop for mouth, he be cold too much, but he all go for water all same as them water you drink." So I called Sammy again. "Now, open them mouth again, Sammy." Very reluctantly he opened it, and in went another piece of ice. I took precautions to hold his mouth closed this time, he struggled, but I would not let go and the ice melted. The other children went through the same process. When we arrived back at the Mission in the evening, they told the people of the town—"That them hard word Missionary tell us when we live for them beach, be true, all same as them word he speak for Church."

CHANGES PRODUCED IN THE MISSION CENTRES.

A great change in the outward appearance. In the dress, manners, and general bearing of the people.

Habits of cleanliness have been enforced.

Human sacrifices have been abolished.

Trial by ordeal is a relic of the past.

Infanticide has ceased.

The principle of honesty prevails.

Womanhood has been elevated.

Respect for the old people is observed.

The Sabbath has been made a day of rest.

Slavery is dying out.

Training Institutes are multiplying.

Evangelists are being trained.

Young people are walking in the light of Christian life and truth.

The spirit of liberality is growing.

The promises of God are receiving a rich fulfilment.

“ Shine, Light of God, make broad Thy scope,
To all who sin and suffer, more
And better than we dared to hope,
With Heaven's compassion,
Make our longings poor.”

CHAPTER II.

WEST AFRICA—FERNANDO PO.

1. Missions and Commerce.	5. The New Name.
2. A Hero Martyr Missionary.	6. First Fruits for the Lord.
3. Clement's Sacrifice.	7. House Warming.
4. Our Missionary Anniversary.	8. The passing of a Veteran.

CHAPTER II.

MISSIONS AND COMMERCE.

THERE was a time when the representatives of Commerce regarded the Missionary with suspicion and looked upon him as a hindrance ! Certain Steamship Companies refused him a passage in their boats, and he was forbidden to labour in certain territory, but that day has gone by, and a new feeling has sprung up in his favour. Statesmen and enlightened business people now realize that the Missionary has not only gone out as a pioneer of the Gospel, but he has been the means of opening out countries to trade and commerce it would have been impossible originally for the trader to enter, for had he attempted to do so, it would have been at the expense of his life. Primitive Methodism is vitally related to the Commerce of the Island of Fernando Po. We have largely made the Island what it is to-day, and its commercial prosperity can be traced to the early adherents of the Primitive Methodist Church. Before the introduction of our Church it was insignificant as a port of call, now it is one of the most important cocoa centres on the West Coast, and Primitive Methodists were among the first to start the Cocoa Industry. Several years ago when stationed on the Mainland, I paid

a visit to San Carlos Bay in company with Rev. N. Boocock ; there was then on the beach one fisherman's hut. Six years later there were five trading houses, the Mission Colony up the mountain with the large Cocoa Farms surrounding it, had created the inducement for the trader to settle there. Objections have been raised that some Missions give far more attention to industrial work than to the spiritual, and that others devote all their energies to the spiritual and neglect the industrial. Neither of these objections are applicable to our own Missions ; we give the premier place, of course, to the spiritual, but we use the Industrial branch as a kind of elementary training ground, or a stepping stone to the Cross. When our early Missionaries commenced to work at San Carlos Bay, they had no town to settle in. and no people on the spot to minister to, but they built the Mission House in the forest, and began to clear the bush and plant Cocoa. When the cocoa trees began to bear they visited the villages away up the mountain and persuaded the Bubis to come and work for them, in return for which they would pay them in cloth and other articles. Those who came were not only taught the dignity of labour, but heard the Gospel story from the lips of the Missionary, and the result was the settlement of a few families round the Mission House, which has since developed into a Christian Colony of three hundred souls. Most of our people now have farms of their own, and their labour is lost to us, but we continue to draw down the bush Bubis, and when they come they cannot help but notice the contrast between the condition of the people of the

Colony and their own, hence some of them request to be allowed to remain. During our term at San Carlos we were constantly receiving applications from them to settle on the Mission Hill, applications which we rarely refused when there were indications of a desire to live a changed life. Our Industrial work at San Carlos is a great help to our Mission, it teaches the dignity of labour, it liberates the Connexion from financial responsibility, it enables parents to give their children a good education either at our Institute at Oron, or by drafting them to England, it is also adding to the value and health of the Island year by year.

A HERO MARTYR MISSIONARY.

No man won his way so quickly into the hearts of the Fernandians as Matthew Barron. How those people loved him. Kind, genial, forbearing, forgiving and generous to a fault. His eagerness to pick out the good, blinded him to the faults of men. By attempting too much he had to suffer the extreme penalty and died in the prime of manhood. We remember one day a message came from a member of his flock who was ill, and wished to see him. He was far from well himself, in fact, he had a stiff dose of fever with a high temperature. We offered our services in his stead, but no, he would go. On his return he collapsed, and passed through a dangerous illness. The Missionary was smitten down at Bottler Point and being alone, messengers were despatched simultaneously to San Carlos and St. Isabel. Mrs. Stones and I arrived early, being favoured with a

good wind. Mr. Barron, coming in the opposite direction, encountered heavy seas, and found it impossible to negotiate a dangerous point ; several attempts were made and each one failed. Then putting into a little cove he sent the boat back to Town, and with a boy commenced the journey on foot. Missionaries to Fernando Po know what a hazardous undertaking that is, especially in the rainy season, the rivers are rushing torrents and many of them had to be crossed between St. Isabel and Bottler Point. Vegetation was so thick that a way had to be made. It was the afternoon of Sunday, the Service had just concluded, and we saw from the Mission House Mr. Barron approaching. His bedraggled appearance brought tears to our eyes, he was drenched to the skin and utterly exhausted, for eight hours he had struggled bravely on, forgetful of himself in his desire to help others. That act of heroism should have earned for him the Victoria Cross. When the Missionary from Bottler Point returned home on furlough, Mr. Barron kept the two Missions going, and held the fort until the arrival of a successor. It was too much, human nature could not stand it. He brought the new Missionary to his Station, was seized with a sudden illness, and his work was done. I was sent for by messenger, but ere I arrived he had passed beyond the shadows. We bore his body to Town and deposited it in the Church amid the lamentations of his flock. The funeral was perhaps the largest ever seen in Fernando Po. Government Officials, English, Spanish, and German Traders, followed him to his grave, and thus passed one whose name is carved deep in the hearts of thousands, in this

land and beyond the seas, and he, being dead, yet speaketh. Mrs. Barron came home by the first steamer. Many little packages were made up and sent to her by the Members of St. Isabel Church, and when they were opened they were found to contain gold and little slips of paper on which were written,—“Gifts for the Baby. (their Baby-boy was in the Homeland in the care of kind friends). The sad home-coming of Mrs. Barron was relieved by these touching expressions of sympathy and love.

CLEMENT'S SACRIFICE.

One great advantage of our Industrial work on the Island is that it provides the means whereby the parents are enabled to send their boys to the Training Institute at Oron. We are forbidden to teach English in Fernando Po. The Authorities have closed the Schools, but we have found a way out of the difficulty by drafting our most promising lads to the Mainland. Clement Bomari was one of seven comprising the first batch sent from San Carlos Bay during my term there, two others were Benjamin Twajow Showell, and Barleycorn Mene. They came back after a term to spend their Christmas holidays among their own people. Clement came to the Mission House one morning soon after his return and asked for permission to go up the mountain. He was away two days ; on the third morning he came back bringing with him one of the most pitiable objects I have ever gazed upon. In broken accents he said,—“Massa, this is my mother, I have found her ; I want you to allow

her to live on the Mission Hill, I want to make over my farm to her. He had a cocoa Farm on the Island which was just beginning to bear and would in a year or so from that date have provided him with a comfortable living, with a little bit to spare. But he said, "I do not want a farm, I do not want money, I want to go back to school to learn plenty of book and then to be able to tell my people of the great love of Jesus Christ. To be an Evangelist was a passion with him. We granted his wish, and he went back to his lessons with a glad heart. This is the material out of which we are shaping our workers for the years that are coming, and wherever we find a Mission centre so fortunately circumstanced as to have such converts, its prospects for the future are as bright as the promises of God. Money had no attraction for Clement, he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. We pray that he may be made a burning and a shining light to his own kith and kin.

OUR MISSIONARY ANNIVERSARY.

The great event of the year at San Carlos was the Missionary Anniversary, and the enthusiasm generated at this annual event can hardly be described. About three weeks before the Anniversary was held it was announced from the pulpit, and from that day right up to the Meeting the people of the Mission Hill kept bringing their gifts to the Missionary. Henry Hodge Mene was one of the earliest with his thank-offering. I can see him

now standing on the Verandah of the Mission House with a large red handkerchief, which contained Spanish Dollars. "I bring my gift for the Meeting, Massa. God be very good to me for this year, He bless me plenty, them Cocoa farm do me good fashion." He turned out of the handkerchief the dollars it contained on to the floor, and when we totalled them up we found they valued in English money seven pounds, ten shillings. Men and women, boys and girls, the rich and the poor, all contributed according to their means. It was not necessary to appoint Missionary Collectors, we had no boxes or cards, no pressure was brought to bear upon them to induce them to give, the gifts were spontaneous and hearty. We were not favoured with the presence of a Missionary from the other centres that year, so we made good use of local talent. Dr. Barber, who had often rendered help in various ways, made a good Chairman. The first speaker was "John Petty Sogo," a little old man, with a heart as true as steel. He had been identified with the Mission from its commencement, and was one of the first Members. He has acted as an Interpreter at the Sunday Services. He sits in a wicker chair in the pulpit by the side of the Missionary, and whilst the latter is speaking he is absorbing into his fine retentive memory the address given. At the close he repeats it in Bubi, and those who have been present, and in a position to judge, say he does this with remarkable accuracy. I said to him one day, "Sogo you are getting older, the white hairs are showing, do you fear?" "No," says the little old man, "Never fear, I be ready them time God call."

Sogo's speech (taken down at the time by the Missionary) :

"Mr. Chairman and dear friends,

"I be very glad to come for this Meeting. God spare my life another year, and He bless me plenty for this year, He be good to me all time. I remember first time when Mission start. A few people come down to hear Missionary and we wonder at them word he talk. Mr. Barleycorn try to teach us A.B.C. we laugh because we no sabe them thing, but bye and bye we no laugh because we get to know that them word he teach us be good.

"When I come down for Missionary for second Sunday, my heart be touched, the Spirit speak to me, and I begin to feel happy. When Mission start first we get ticket, and suppose we come plenty time the Missionary give us clo:h, one old man come, he no come for get good heart, but he say he come for get cloth. Mr. Burnett give him ticket, he lose them ticket, so he make big palaver and because he lose them ticket he no come again. Then we tell Missionary that them road be long, so he move Mission House up nearer Bubi town. I remember first marriage and plenty Bubi no like it, we get plenty trouble, but Missionary tell us we no go fear, it soon pass over, we must trust in God, they try to stop people from coming down to Mission ; then we be few now we be many. God has blessed our Mission ; We be like tree that get fruit. Suppose we go plant tree and when them tree grow up we see plenty leaves, but no fruit, we say them tree he be no good ; when we see fruit he make us glad, when we no see fruit, we be sorry. Our Church be all same as tree that get fruit, so because we get fruit we be glad too much.

"My dear brothers and sisters, we want to see more fruit, so we must all do something for God, and take something to God. Suppose we get sickness and trouble, we take it to God and He help us. The first time when we get money we say he be no good, we no want him, now we no say so ; the first time we say, God he be no good, we no want Him. Now we say, He be good, we want Him. Now if we give to God, God he go give back to us, and be fit to bless us more than he bless us before. This language I speak it no be my own, so suppose I make

mistake you no go laugh, but when I talk for my own language, and I make mistake, you all sabe and you all go laugh. I thank God He bring me to see this day, I want Him to spare my life, so that I be fit for do plenty more work for Him, and when my time finish for this world, He will take me to be with Him for ever."

The next speaker was—Thomas Lawrence Lobo, he was the tall man of the Mission, and always wore a smile on his face. He was a splendid advertisement of the transforming power of the Gospel in the human heart. That smile always spoke to me and said—" 'Tis religion makes me happy." In his speech he told us of one of his experiences, whilst fishing in the Bay. He was out on the water with others in canoes and one of those sudden tornadoes, familiar to residents in the Tropics, swooped down upon them; it was so strong and powerful that long before they could reach land the canoes were capsized, some were drowned, Lobo was saved. He says, "When I get for them water, I see them shark swimming about, and I thought my time finish for this world for sure, but God keep the mouth of them shark shut, so he no hurt me. I think I go die when I get for them beach but no I say, God no want me for die yet, He get plenty work for me to do for Mission. This be glad day for my soul."

How simple is the faith of these people, and yet how beautiful, they are so child-like in their attitude to religion, so teachable, so obedient, so trustful.

The last Speaker was—Jesse Sharpe. He came to the Mission as a Kroo boy from Monrovia, and acted for some time as head man on the farm.

The Missionary secured him a grant of land from the Government, and he settled down with us, joined the Church, and has been one of our most earnest workers. He gave us the story of his life, and what the Mission had been to him,—it was a telling and effective address and made a good impression. The Missionary now gave the Financial account, and when everything was totalled up, we found the proceeds of the Anniversary had realized one hundred and four pounds, six shillings and tenpence.

The singing of the Doxology brought to a close the most successful Anniversary we had ever held on the Hill up to that date.

THE NEW NAME.

A visitor going to San Carlos for the first time and climbing the steep gradient to the Mission Hill, would be surprised to hear the names of some of our prominent ministers and laymen mentioned. When a convert was baptized and joined the Church, the Missionary gave him a new name, in addition to the old name he was known by, and this explains why we have on the hill—"John Petty Sogo," "Thomas Lawrence Lobo," "William Cutts Massala," and "Henry Hodge Mene." A young man I baptized, wanted a Christian name, and instantly I thought of a name dear to the hearts of the West Coast Missionaries—"John Caton." What a friend he was to the Missionary, the last to see him off and the first to welcome him home. No sacrifice was too great to make, if by making it he thought he could add to the comfort

of the Missionary, and these little kindnesses coming at a time when he was bidding farewell to loved ones, or on his return in a weak and emaciated condition were all the more appreciated. If any name was deserving of recognition, it was the name of our dear old friend and helper, so this young man who gave promise of becoming a useful member of the Church, was baptized in the name of "John Caton Morah." We forwarded a letter by the first mail to Mr. Caton, and at the earliest possible opportunity, a beautiful copy of the English Bible was sent as a present to his namesake, with a wish that he would soon be able to read it, and that his life might be one full of great blessing to his people.

FIRST FRUITS FOR THE LORD.

The members of our Churches in Fernando Po do not need to be reminded of the duty of Christian beneficence. Reports go to prove that at least two of our Mission Stations are almost, if not altogether self-supporting. From the early days of our work on the Island up to the present a very high average of Christian giving has been maintained, and as the Industrial work has prospered, so the contributions have increased.

Several new grants of land had been obtained by Members of the San Carlos Mission ; cocoa had been planted, and during my first year the young trees were beginning to bear. That same season I had several bags of cocoa beans deposited at the Mission House, they represented the first fruits from the new farms and were given to God as a

thank-offering. The Christian native would not think of selling to a trader until this obligation had been met, and God had been recognised. The cocoa was sold at the best price and the proceeds went into the Mission Fund. The cocoa that came in this way always looked well, giving evidence that it had been carefully cleaned and dried. They gave to God, and they gave their best.

HOUSE WARMING.

A new house is nearing completion on the Mission Hill and the owner comes to the Missionary to fix a day for the house warming. When the date is fixed, the members are informed by notice from the pulpit. It is a glad day, the people don their Sunday apparel and swarm to the service in the new house. We proceed after the manner of a church service, the singing is very hearty and after the reading of the Scriptures—generally selected from portions describing the dedication of the Temple—the address is given, but perhaps the most important part of the ceremony is the prayer that God would make His presence felt in this new home, that He would be a constant Guest, dwell richly in each heart, help in every hour of need, and give great prosperity through life. Many of the people stay throughout the day and into the night singing the Mission Hymns. The new tenant is satisfied, and retires to rest, with a contented mind. We encouraged this practice, it brings a sense of dependence upon God, it creates a feeling of security under His watchful eye, and turns the home into a sacred place.

THE PASSING OF A VETERAN.

Returning home on furlough I made an early call on the Missionary Secretary, Rev. R. W. Burnett. I found him seriously ill, suffering from the effects of prolonged terms of service in Africa. One look was sufficient to prove that the deadly Malaria was claiming another victim. In a feeble voice he welcomed me back, and then uttered the memorable words,—“Brother Stones, you will soon be on tour in the Connexion doing deputation work. Tell our people that R. W. Burnett says if he had his life to live over again, he would spend it in the service of his Church, in the Foreign Field, he would go to Africa, and seek to save the poor Bubi from heathen darkness and superstition.” Brave words from a brave and heroic soul. Three weeks after my interview with him the call came to the higher service of heaven, and the Church suffered an irreparable loss. The life of the Missionary is hard and strenuous, but it has a peaceful ending. He dies well.

CHAPTER III.

CENTRAL AFRICA—ZAMBESI.

1. Then and Now.	6. His Last Journey.
2. Wankies to the
Zambesi.	7. The Toll of the Bridge.
3. Mr. Hogg of Sajobas.	8. A Victim to Drink.
4. Watch by the Sick.	9. A Travelling Preacher.
5. Red Letter Day.	10. His Mother's Bible.
	11. Welcoming our Coming.

CHAPTER III.

THEN AND NOW.

A GREAT amount of light has been thrown upon the dark Continent of Africa within the last 20 or 30 years. Before then it was unknown except to a few travellers and Missionaries. It was generally reported that Central Africa was an uninhabited desert with miles and miles of waste land and swamp. We now know that it is wonderfully productive, that it consists of terraces of high tableland rising thousands of feet above sea level and thickly populated by a superior type of native. To get to Central Africa a few years ago meant exposing oneself to grave dangers, not only from the wild beasts, but also from the people, who were very unfriendly. It involved an enormous expense. Wagons and oxen had to be secured in South Africa at some of the trade centres, also an outfit for several years. The privations and sufferings of our pioneer Missionaries are familiar to us all, and the large financial outlay which had to be involved in establishing our Missions among the Mashukulumbé. All that is changed now, and central Africa has been explored ; there is scarcely any portion of it which has not come under the gaze of the European. Its enormous mineral wealth is being tapped, and little townships are dotted here and there where

the wild beasts once roamed at will. The railway like a narrow thread runs from south to north, and you can get to within a hundred miles or so of any of our Mission Stations. It is possible now to take your seat in a fast Express leaving Capetown and go right through to the Victoria Falls Station in four days, a distance of one thousand six hundred and forty-four miles. The Train De Luxe, as it is called, will compare favourably with the best we have at home, and every modern improvement for the comfort of passengers is to be found on it. You may dine in the best style on several courses, get your morning bath, have access to a good library, pass the time in a Reading Room or sit outside the car enjoying the panoramic view of varied landscape, and pick out places which have become historic by war or as the last resting places of some of Britain's bravest sons. Certainly there are stages of the journey when you will desire the seclusion of your own compartment, miles and miles of waste land where the dust storms are blinding, and you wonder how human beings can live and thrive on it, and yet such tracks are healthy and people do live and multiply and make money. But scenery in its wildest and grandest form you will get as you enter the belt of forest bordering on the Zambesi. Those who have passed through it can understand the expressions of surprise on the lips of England's greatest African explorer. The changes that have taken place are all in our favour and facilitate the more rapid spread of the Redeemer's Kingdom in a land whose people now are waiting and eager for the Gospel message.

“WANKIES TO THE ZAMBESI.”

Wankies is situated between Buluwayo and the Victoria Falls. Livingstone in his book of travels describes it as an Inferno. His native carriers in passing through this hollow dropped off like flies, and for a time it seemed as though he would be left stranded for want of men. He discovered coal here, and within the last few years a Colliery has been started. A small Colony of white men has sprung up who have the oversight of hundreds of native workers in the Mines. There is coal in abundance, and large quantities are sent off daily to the Southern towns. Wankies was my starting point for a tramp on foot to the Zambesi. I set out at the invitation of Mr. Hogg, to attend the opening services of the Church at Sajobas. Arrangements had been made for his boys to meet me at the railway head, but owing to the incessant rains they were delayed. I hired six boys from a trader, and without a tent or other covering for the night, set out on the long trek. We made good progress and reached the first water at 1 p.m. Here I met with Mr. Walker, who had come from the Zambesi, and who has a store on the south side of the river. From him I secured a large piece of tarpaulin, which served my purpose very well for the journey. We only made a short stay here, as I was anxious to push on ; we had eighty miles to do, and this was Thursday noon. Sunday was Christmas Day, and I was due at Sajobas for the opening of the Church, that meant I must cover a distance of 30 miles per day to fulfil my appointment. One hour of sharp walking brought us to

the first river—the Likosi—this river we shall have to cross twelve times, it was in flood, as there had been some heavy rains, but the boys were able to carry me over. Sitting under a tree on the other side, and getting his mid-day meal, I found the District Commissioner of Tsheti. He was striking the river at Sajobas, so from this place we travelled on together. We had a long tramp that afternoon, and at 6 p.m. we settled down for the night. A large space was fenced off with branches of trees, the tents erected and large fires lighted to scare off the lions. The natives brought grain and sheep and we made a good evening meal. At 4.30 the following morning we were again on the march. The District Commissioner had a camel with him on which he rode at intervals. Horses do not thrive in the Zambesi Valley, so this camel had been imported from India as an experiment. I had the use of this camel on three occasions, and found it a considerable help. It has a most peculiar motion when travelling, and you would think you were going over its head one minute, and then falling backwards the next, but one soon gets accustomed to it. This day we covered over thirty miles, and pitched for the night on high land near a waterfall. During the day I had two comical experiences with the camel, which, however, might have proved disastrous. I was on its back and crossing the Likosi, which at this place was rather deep, we crossed safely, but in getting up the bank on the opposite side the camel fell and rolled over on its side into the river, fortunately I managed to struggle clear, and beyond a thorough soaking I was little the worse. My next mishap was during our

Crossing the Zambesi at Sajobas.

Rev. M. H. Barron.

passage through a thick belt of forest, after leaving the river Gwai. The branches of the trees in some places were not high enough to permit of a camel and its rider passing under, one had to keep a sharp look-out lest he should come to grief. We were making good progress, however, and once I turned round in the saddle to ask for a drink of cold coffee from the boy who was following up, when suddenly I found myself pinned between two strong branches of a tree. The camel went on and left me suspended there to the intense amusement of the boys. I dropped to the ground and again remounted, and you may rest assured that afterwards I kept my eyes open for obstructions. Christmas Eve found us in the Government Camp near a large native town, called Chabis. There was nothing to remind one of the festive season, no snow, no holly or mistletoe, no carol singers. Our thoughts turned towards the Homeland, with the joys of its family gatherings. We took some refreshment, and when the boys had kindled large fires in the camp the Chief was asked by the Commissioner to bring his people in and give us a native dance. This was my first experience of Batonga dances. And now an incident occurred for which I was profoundly sorry. The District Commissioner poured out a glass of gin and gave it to the chief, he drank part of it and politely returned the glass. His face was a picture of misery, and it had on it a look of disgust. "Do you like it?" asked the Government representative. "No," he immediately replied, "it makes man's body like them fire." Here was an object lesson which I took care to drive home. The District Commissioner expressed his regret,

he said it was the first time he had offered any intoxicating liquors to a native, and it should be the last. The native in his primitive condition does not like the white man's spirits, that liking has to be created. It is only fair to say that in North West Rhodesia no trader is allowed to sell beer or spirits to the natives. Christmas morning we were astir early and getting ready for another start. We were ten miles from Sajobas and were anxious to get there before the sun was powerful. It was the final stage of our journey, and we were well pleased. At the end of two hours, from the high tableland on the South side of the river, we get our first view of the Mission House and Church with the Zambesi far below us winding like a thread of silver through the fertile valley. A steep descent among the rocks, after which we crossed the river by canoe, and my first long trek had come to an end. Christmas day was spent very quietly with Mr. Hogg and his daughters. We were to open the Church, but on account of the severe rains it was found impossible to complete it, so the opening ceremony was postponed for a week.

MR. HOGG, OF SAJOBAS.

Mr. Hogg was the first to plant the Gospel standard on the banks of the Zambesi for Primitive Methodism. He was a brave warrior and died fighting. He could wield a sledge hammer or a pen to advantage. He could build himself a house out of the primitive material growing round him, and produce from the clay a first-rate brick. He had the knowledge and nerve to amputate a limb.

He was skilful enough to prescribe for almost any tropical disease. He was a minister of comfort to the people. A man with a striking personality, he had the patience of Job and the moral courage of the strongest saint. Above all he had a love for his work amounting to a passion, the spirit of His Master possessed him through and through. He is one of the many who have died before their time, because they have attempted to put the work of a lifetime into a few years. In his early days at Sajobas during a conversation he had with the Chief, the latter expressed the doubt that Mr. Hogg would not stay long, he would soon want to return to his own country. Mr. Hogg replied, "I have come to live among you, to work for you, and if it be God's will, to die here, and when I die you must bury me under that tree," pointing to a large tree between the Mission House and the river. It was a prophetic utterance. The Chief and his people amid signs of intense mourning, helped to bury him under that same tree. On a little mound overlooking the wide reaches of the lovely Zambesi he awaits the trumpet call, and on the foundations of the noble work he laid at the cost of his life, his successors are building the walls of the city of God.

WATCH BY THE SICK.

The following incident I received from the lips of Mr. Hogg.

Mrs. Hogg was invalided home ; her husband saw her on the steamer at Capetown, and then went back into the Zambesi Valley. He gathered the

lads of the Mission around him and said to them, "My lads, Massa be all alone now, there be no white man near, suppose I be sick plenty and lie for them bed, I want you to look after me." The lads promised, and they were true to their word. The extra strain of preparing material for the new Church—tree felling, brick making and joinery work told its tale on his strong constitution, and the day came when he lay prostrate upon his bed, delirious and unconscious. When he came to himself, he saw one of his lads sitting on the floor by the side of the bed and addressing him in his native tongue, said, "My lad, how long have I been lying here?" The boy replied, "Massa, you go lie for them bed one night, one day and one night again," and said Mr. Hogg, "What have you been doing?" The boy said, "I sit by Massa's bed." But said Mr. Hogg, "You no get food, you no get water." "No," said the boy. "Well, why you no get food, why you no get water?" "Well, I look Massa and he no get food, he no get water, so I say, boy no want food, boy no want water." The lad had been keeping faithful watch by the side of the sick Missionary. That Zambesi valley was the recruiting ground for native labour, and some of the towns were almost depopulated of young men. The Capitalist had sent his parasites into the valley and he had said of these Zambesi lads, they are only black niggers, bind them and force them to labour in the mines. The Saviour now passes that way, and through the Missionary He says of these same lads, "These are my children, my jewels." He shows them His pierced hands and says, "I suffered this for you," and those

young lads cling passionately to His feet and with their hearts filled with a new found joy, cry out with Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

"RED LETTER DAY AT SAJOBAS."

It must have been one of the outstanding events in the life of Mr. Hogg when, on New Year's Day, under a tropical sun in the midst of an immense crowd of Batonga people, we opened the first brick Church for God and Primitive Methodism in the valley of the Zambesi. It is not given to every man to see so much accomplished in so short a period. Four years previous to this event the people were in total darkness, no one had come to tell them of a Saviour's love, and there are thousands to-day in that Zambesi valley who have never heard the glad tidings proclaimed. We dare not attempt to describe the feelings of the people as they flocked into the Church for the first time. The old chief was there, his face beaming with joy. I thought the natives that day were far more interested in the building than in the preacher or what he said, but we were disposed to make every excuse for them, the building itself spoke to them of God's love with far greater effect than any living voice. It was an oblong structure, lofty, and with plenty of air space and capable of seating two hundred and fifty adults, the walls were of burnt brick and the roof of galvanized sheets. When a Church is erected at home, an Architect is consulted, plans and specifications are drawn up, applications for tenders are sent out, and the successful builder commences his work. On most

of our Mission Stations the Missionary represents in himself, architect, builder, mason, and carpenter, and to tax his energies still more he adds to these that of medical practitioner. He sees his wood growing in the forest, he must dig out of the earth the material for his bricks, and for labourers he has to enlist the young raw recruits from the people among whom he lives. To erect a Church under these conditions is no easy task, but difficulties only act as incentives to some men.

The boys of the Mission went to work with a will, and under the superintendence of Mr. Hogg, made and burnt twenty five thousand bricks, and gathered together all the wood from the forest which was needed for the roof, windows and doors. It was not forced labour, for like the Jerusalem builders of old, the people had a mind to work, they put heart and soul into their toil, they did it as unto the Lord, and when the day of reckoning comes those brave lads shall have their reward. If Mr. Hogg had done nothing else on the Zambesi than gather this young life around him, and infused into it such noble ideals, he would not have toiled in vain. The opening of the new Church was, indeed, a red letter day, not only to the people of Sajobas, but also to those who lived within a radius of six miles of the Mission. News was conveyed to all the kraals by messenger that God's House would be opened on New Year's Day, so there was a gathering together of the clans; from early morning they kept streaming in, and we could hear their singing, the clapping of hands and the sound of the tom-toms long before they drew near. I performed the ceremony of opening the Church, a little pleasant

duty which had never fallen to my lot before, nor has it fallen to my lot since. They do not generally ask Primitive Methodist Ministers to open Churches, their financial limitations are too well known. The Service in the Church was conducted by Mr. Hogg. He gave an interesting resume of his work in the neighbourhood, and of how God had set His seal upon it, with the result that they had that day the new Sanctuary in which to worship Him. The singing went well, Mr. Hogg had translated a few hymns, viz., "Knocking, knocking, who is there," "O Lord of Heaven and earth and sea," "Look, ye saints the sight is glorious," etc., and had taught the lads to sing them to the old familiar tunes. The Service over, the day was given up to wild rejoicings. Perhaps it would have shocked the feelings of the more sensitive, if they had witnessed these natives giving expression in their own way to the joys of the heart, the strange evolutions of the body, the hideous contortions of the face, the beating of drums, the blowing of horns and the constant tinkle of the brass and beads worn by the women made a sound that we cannot describe as musical, but it must have caught the ear of Heaven and was registered in the Lamb's Book of Life as a Hallelujah Chorus. The following day was a general holiday, sports were arranged, prizes were distributed to successful competitors, and to crown all, a great feast off the fat of the land was held. Such incidents as the above are rare, very rare, we could wish to see them repeated every week, for they are reminders that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

HIS LAST JOURNEY.

Five thousand acres of land on the banks of the Zongwe, a tributary of the Zambesi, had been promised to our Church by the Government of North-West Rhodesia, for the purpose of establishing an Industrial centre, and just a few days after the opening of Sajobas Church, news had come down from Kaloma saying that the District Commissioner had been instructed to accompany Mr. Hogg to ascertain the particular locality, and stake out the land chosen. As I was at Sajobas at the time, Mr. Hogg pressed me to accompany him, for I should not only see the District and be able to give an independent opinion, but be a witness to the Deed of Settlement. I consented to be one of the party, and I shall have cause to remember that journey, its effects remained with me for many months, and it turned out to be the last Mr. Hogg was permitted to make. It was unfortunate we went at that season of the year, but it was the only time the District Commissioner could be spared ; it was the rainy season, the rivers were in flood and on several occasions we were drenched to the skin with the heavy rains. We started from the Mission in good health, a kind trader placed his boat at our disposal, and we made rapid progress down the river to a point from which we were to strike across the country for the Zongwe.

We crossed a ridge of hills and found a district thickly populated. I was impressed with the hospitality of the people, and the kindness shown to us ; wherever we settled for the night they would make a clearing for our tents and bring in

all the wood we needed for the fires. In the early mornings we were supplied with milk, and we could buy plenty of grain for a few beads or a yard of cloth. They greeted us by the clapping of hands—the usual form of salutation to Government officials. Lions were so numerous that we always had them in the vicinity of the camp. The natives slept in huts erected on long posts about twelve feet from the ground. A large town at which we stopped was situated close to a Mapani forest, but the Chief would not have the trees cut down, for he said the spirits of his ancestors walked there. The return journey was made in almost incessant rain. I could see the strain of the journey was beginning to tell on Mr. Hogg, but he made light of my suspicions, and we pressed on for several miles and pitched our tents for the night at one of the towns on the banks of the Zambesi. The next day he had to confess that he was feeling unwell. The boat was not available, as it was making slow progress several miles lower down the river, so a messenger was despatched with all haste to Sajobas and when about ten miles from home a horse belonging to the Government arrived on the scene; by the time the Mission was reached, he showed symptoms of blackwater fever. We put him to bed, and the only words he uttered were "Thank God." I stayed on at the Mission two weeks, he pulled through and was well on the road to recovery. I left him in the care of his daughters and started for the Falls; he must have attempted work too soon, for seven days after my arrival at Livingstone I received a telegram which had been despatched from Wankies, saying Mr. Hogg was

seriously ill. I immediately made preparations and set off again for Sajobas, but received another message to say he was dead. Ere I arrived friendly hands had laid him to rest in the shade of a large tree in front of the Mission House, and the news was flashed home that Africa had claimed another victim, and our Church had suffered an irreparable loss. What better epitaph could be written across his life than the farewell words of the greatest Missionary,—“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

THE TOLL OF THE BRIDGE.

A few valuable lives were sacrificed in the erection of that wonderful piece of engineering skill—that spans the gorge at the Victoria Falls. A Frenchman was crushed by a girder whilst it was being placed in position ; he lingered for a few hours and then died, and the melancholy task was allotted to me of performing the last sad rites over his body. He was a prominent workman, and on the day of his funeral all work was stopped. It happened at the time we were holding our first Conference of Missionaries at Livingstone. His workmates and nearly all the Europeans of the District were present at his funeral ; it was the largest gathering of white people I had seen on the north side of the river. He was a Roman Catholic, so were many of his co-workers, but as we stood at the grave side nationality and creed were forgotten. What impressed me most was the singing of the hymn,—“Rock of Ages,” and the tears that fell down the cheeks of those French mechanics. It is a hymn

that will move the hardest heart, but under those special circumstances and conditions the effect was most impressive. It was a unique gathering, for in addition to the workers on the bridge, traders, and Government officials, there were present Revs. Coisson, of the French Protestant Mission, E. W. Smith, W. Chapman, Mr. Hogg and his two daughters, Jeannie and Lizzie. We cannot tell, but it may be that the seeds of the Kingdom were sown in many a heart as we sang :—

“ While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyes shall close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

A VICTIM TO DRINK.

It is Monday morning and the post has just arrived in the White Settlement near the Falls. Work is laid aside for a time and the Post Office is besieged. We cannot wait until we get back to our huts, but standing about here and there we hastily run over the news from the Homeland. It is a study to watch the faces of the readers and to note the conflicting emotions they betray for in the letters are messages of joy and sorrow, of life and death. One solitary individual is without a letter, which he has been anxiously expecting for several weeks ; his face is a picture of misery. I approach him to offer a few words of comfort, for I can see that the disappointment has stabbed him to the heart. He is the little old man who first

bade me welcome on my arrival. He was a Wesleyan at home, but on coming to South Africa he joined the Salvation Army. Crossing over the Zambesi he found no Church, no religious institution and no spiritual adviser, and mixing up with the rough characters he drifted from his religious moorings. He attended my services, but I saw that the great drink curse had polluted his soul. He was a certificated chemist in the employ of a Bulawayo firm, but all his takings he spent in drink, and the outcome of it was the Firm dismissed him. He was allowed temporary quarters at the Nurses' Home, and in the meantime wrote home pleading for help, and this Monday morning he had come to the Post Office, not for the first time, expecting the much needed cheque. No letter. He stood like one demented. He must have sauntered away into the bush and laid himself down under a tree. The disappointment and mental strain had brought on an attack of fever, and in the night he died there wretched and alone. His body was found the following day by a native policeman. That night in the moonlight we conveyed him to his last resting place in the little cemetery, and as we concluded the service, I turned to Rev. Coisson, the French Protestant Missionary, and said, "Is it difficult to find out the cause of this sad ending?" In reply, he simply repeated the one word—"DRINK."

A TRAVELLING PREACHER.

My Circuit was larger than the whole Connexion at home and extended further than from John O'Groats to Land's End. I did not cover it all but

I visited many of the larger towns and held services with good results. Here is a passage from my Journal, entitled, "An Eighty Miles Trek." The journey I made on this occasion was for a twofold purpose, viz. : to preach the Gospel to the people and to buy grain for the boys of Sajobas Mission. In previous years the supply has been as great as the demand, but this year at Sajobas and immediate districts the crops had turned out a failure, so to keep our own Mission going until next Harvest we were compelled to go farther afield. I did not take a tent, as it was the dry season, but slept at night on a stretcher under the trees, with the boys sleeping round me, and fires burning to scare off the lions and tigers.

July 12th, Malundu. We arrived at this place about 4 p.m., bought three bags of grain and held a service at night, sixty present. The people were delighted and would like the Missionary to come again soon. The first time this people had heard the Gospel.

July 13th, Seamajia. Arrived 10.30 a.m. after three hours brisk walking. Had an interview with the old chief and his brothers. Bought two bags of grain, visited the surrounding villages and announced a Lantern Service in the evening. More than 200 people gathered round us at 7 p.m. as pictures illustrating the Life of Christ were thrown upon the sheet. We were in the open air under the rich foliage of the trees, and the scene was an impressive one. After the Lantern we conducted a short service. The singing and the pictures impressed the people most. I had our own boys from the Mission with me, who knew the Mission hymns.

I cannot speak too highly of the use to which a Lantern may be put among these Zambesians. I have great cause to thank God that I took my lantern with me, by so doing I could appeal to the hearts of the people, both through the eye and the ear. Another request to come again soon.

July 14th, Mudodoles. Arrived at this place about 3 p.m. Here we have a chief who takes the greatest interest in Mission work, and who has been constantly making appeals for a Missionary to be settled in his town. A hearty welcome awaited us here. The river is some distance from the town, and as we had travelled by boat to-day, all our luggage was brought along with us. It was unnecessary to ask the people to help us, they came down of their own free will and transferred all that we had to the town. Held a service in the evening, about fifty present.

July 15th. Spent the early morning with the gun looking round for a dinner, after which I was engaged in buying grain. The afternoon was also spent in buying grain. In the evening at 7, I gave the Lantern pictures interspersed with singing. I should say there were 250 to 300 present. News had travelled to the neighbouring kraals of the service held on the previous evening, and so the people came trooping in to see and hear the Missionary. Here, also, I was asked to come again, and without exception this request was made at every place I visited.

July 16th, Muembas. We travelled by land to this place, arriving early in the afternoon. The distance is about five miles from Mudodoles. This is the largest town we have seen on the North bank

of the river and would make a splendid centre for a Mission. I should say the Chief was the oldest native on the river. He had transferred all power and authority over to his sons. Rumours were afloat that this was the Chief who offered such strong antagonism to the Jesuit Missionaries who visited his town in the seventies with the object of settling there, and it is also reported that some of the party died horrible deaths by torture and starvation. The natives preserve a strict silence on this matter, so our information comes from an outside source. My interview with this Chief was a very pathetic one. He was nearly blind with age and could only stand when leaning heavily on his stick. As I spoke to him through an interpreter he seemed deeply moved and thanked me for coming to his people, he would welcome a Missionary now and one would be sure of kind treatment. Remarkable changes have taken place since those days when in the prime of manhood he defied the pioneers of the Gospel. We can but pray that in the eventide of life amid its deepening shadows, the Light of the World will guide him home. In the evening we fixed up the Lantern. The attendance was so large that we could not get the exact number, but I should say considerably over 200 were present. The singing of the boys went well, and was much appreciated. I cannot describe the feelings of the people when the pictures were exhibited.

July 17th. Sunday morning. Held a service in the centre of the town, 140 present. Four Chiefs came with their sons, young lads about 12 years of age, and wished them to accompany me back to Sajobas to receive training at the Mission.

I consented to take them, and I am hoping they will turn out a great blessing in the near future. Returned to Mudodoles in the afternoon and held a service at night, 120 present.

July 18th. Left Mudodoles and commenced the return journey, arriving at Sia Matimbos about noon. Gave the Lantern in the evening, about 60 present.

July 19th. Arrived at Sia Ngombe after a long trek in the afternoon. This is a very large town with a network of villages surrounding it. Another fine centre. Held a service in the evening and gave the Lantern, more than 200 present.

July 20th. Another long trek brought us to Sia Mpondo, this, also, is a large town within ten miles of Sajobas. The Chief gave us a hearty welcome, and sent two of his boys to receive training at the Mission. We held a very successful service in the evening illustrated by the Lantern. As in other places, the audience was considerably over 200. Early the following morning we started for home, which was reached by noon. If we could concentrate on this Zambesi Valley and place half a dozen men in some of the centres I have named, the day is not far distant when a rich and glorious harvest could be gathered into the garner of the Lord.

“ Say not ye there are yet four months and then cometh harvest, behold ! I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest.”

HIS MOTHER'S BIBLE.

Friendless and forsaken without any visible means of subsistence, he had crossed the Zambesi and wandering about in the hope of something turning up, he at last lay down from sheer exhaustion on the veldt two miles from the Falls. His body was found by a representative of the Government and brought down to Livingstone. From his appearance he seemed little more than a lad. Perhaps he was a prodigal who had chafed under the restraints of home life, or he had read the glowing reports of the wealth of the country in the region of the Copper Mines, and had determined in the misguided zeal of youth to seek a fortune there. His hopes were doomed to disappointment. How many there are to-day, tired of the old country, who are led on by the glamour of distance into the belief that wealth is to be had for the asking the farther they get from the land of their birth. There are fortunes to be made in Africa, as elsewhere, but they only come as the result of a prolonged expenditure of brains and muscle. On searching this lad for any clue as to his identity, a Bible was found in the inside pocket of his coat, and on the fly-leaf, just the words, "A parting gift from mother." Inquiries were set on foot and publicity was given to the case in the papers of South Africa, but no answer came, we knew that somewhere a mother's heart was yearning for news of her lad and that the continued suspense would be far worse than the knowledge of his death. The Bible had not been claimed when I returned. We gave him a decent burial in the little cemetery at Livingstone

by the side of the son of a South Sea Island Missionary.

WELCOMING OUR COMING.

A fine opportunity awaits us in the Zambesi Valley. Here is a large tract of fertile country extending from Sajobas to the Kariba Gorge, teeming with an immense population, and not a single Missionary until Mr. Hogg arrived. This vast district has been allocated to our Church by the Chartered Company to evangelize. The French Protestant Missionaries occupy the higher reaches of the Zambesi above the Falls, where they have some fine centres and where they have done some magnificent work. We have advantages in the lower Zambesi which they had not. The district is not so swampy, we have a long stretch of river navigable at all times and in all places ; the people line the river banks and are anxiously awaiting the coming of the Missionary. The Barotsi missionaries had to contend originally with the opposition of the people who were led on by the Kings and Chiefs, and if in spite of these disadvantages they have made such progress, what could not we accomplish in a district where the Chiefs and people are so friendly ? The Batongas are much above the average in intelligence and physique. One noble feature they possess is their honesty. Mr. Hogg said he had never missed an article, his doors were never locked, and when he had occasion to leave the Mission for days together, he never took any precautionary measures against thieving, for he could rest assured that on his return he would

find the Mission premises and all that they contained just as he had left them. One incident I recall to mind. We were camping near Mudodoles on our return from the Zongwe, the District Commissioner was with me, and he had been giving vent to his feelings on the general character of the people. He said they were lazy, ignorant, filthy and dishonest. That same evening the Chief and some of his men came to the Camp with grain and sheep, and just before they left the Chief said to the Government representative, "You have forgotten about the sheep that you left with me when you were here last." "O, yes," he said, "I had, I am pleased you have mentioned it!" Our eyes met, I suppose he interpreted my look as a rebuke for his untruthful remarks concerning them. The Chief brought along the sheep and seemed quite pleased he had been able to do him a good turn. They are kind to the old and the infirm; the sick and deformed are the objects of their constant care, and they treat them with the greatest respect, providing their food and making life as easy for them as possible. They are sympathetic; on our return from the Zongwe, Mr. Hogg was laid aside by sickness, which proved fatal, and the Mission Mouse was besieged by the natives, who manifested their sorrow day after day. One of the earliest callers was a blind woman. She came down from the town, which was a quarter of a mile away from the Mission, with the help of a staff, and asked whether the teacher was any better, "her heart was sad when they tell her he was sick." They believe in a spirit world and practise ancestor worship. Between the town and the Mission a

stone was pointed out to me, it marks the spot where a Chief lies buried. At certain periods of the year the people gather round his grave and pray to the spirit of the departed for a good season and fine crops. Polygamy does not assume such proportions as on the West Coast. The selling of drink to the natives is prohibited in the country, and the climate whilst being far from healthy, is much better suited for the European than is the Gulf of Guinea. These Batongas were long neglected but our Missionaries are now labouring among them, and their work is prospering. Everywhere the people welcome them. They have got to know that the Missionary is their friend, and they look up to him for protection, help and guidance.

CHAPTER IV.

THINGS HUMOROUS AND GRAVE.

1. A First Suit.
2. The New Umbrella.
3. Gigantic Evils—
 Drink.

Slavery. Superstition. Conclusion.
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CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST SUIT.

Our first duty to the boys and girls of the Mission House was to clothe them. Mrs. Stones made print cotton dresses for the girls and suits for the boys. How proud those children were and what excitement there was in trying them on. I had occasion to go to a village away back in the bush, the children wished to accompany me. I learnt afterwards they were anxious to show the people their fine clothing. The roads in West Africa are not wide and hard as we have them in this country, but very narrow paths winding in and out, and if a tree should fall across the old path they do not remove it but make a fresh path round it, that accounts for their zig-zag character. To cover a distance of, say, three miles, as the crow flies, you have to walk perhaps five. We were returning home in the late afternoon and the sky became overcast with clouds and soon the rain began to fall. I was on first, as we had to walk in single file, and turning round to urge the children on, a strange sight met my view. The children had taken off their clothing, and rolled it up as tightly as possible and then put it under the arm, and they were coming along as happy as ducks in a mud puddle. They said they did not want the rain to

spoil their new clothes, they wanted to keep them clean and dry.

THE NEW UMBRELLA.

The father of one of the boys had given him some English money, and whilst down with me at the Trader's store Rio Del Rey, he bought an umbrella. As we were returning home I was making use of my umbrella for the sun was very powerful. Jimmy thought he must do the same, but presently the rain came down, and down came the umbrella, and he put it under the seat on which he was sitting. So I said to him, "Jimmy, why you do them thing, white man in white man's country, he no do so, when them big rain come, he put them umbrella for head so he keep them rain off, but you when them big rain come, you go pull him down." He replied, "Massa, suppose I leave them umbrella for head when them big rain come, all them shiny thing that live for top he fit come off, so when I go for my people and I say see I buy new umbrella, he be fine too much, they say, "Jimmy, you no speak true word, he no be fine, we no see them shiny thing that live for top." But I said, "Them shiny thing that live for skin no fit come off when them big rain come." Many of the natives rub palm oil over their bodies and it gives the skin a shiny appearance. So Jimmy said, "He no fit, Massa, them shiny thing that live for skin he fit stop all time, but them shiny thing that live for umbrella come off quick." Try as I would, I could not get Jimmy to put up his umbrella while the rain lasted, but when the sun began to shine again, up went the umbrella.

GIGANTIC EVILS.

It is impossible in the space at my disposal to enumerate the many great obstacles the Missionary has to encounter in his work, some of them so great as to seem almost insurmountable, but the greatest of them are slowly but surely giving way before the power of the Gospel. Three of them I will name are so troublesome, as to justify the title, Gigantic Evils.

1. DRINK.

The consumption of intoxicating liquors on the West Coast by the natives is one of the most serious hindrances to the progress of Missionary work. It stalks like a lion in the path of the Missionary, and like a lion it growls, it bites, it kills. How often we have seen its disastrous effects upon white people, it has deprived them of their reason and also the use of their legs and then left them pitiable and degrading objects to roll in the gutter or talk to a lamp-post. Have you never seen it tear from the backs of little children their pretty clothing and leave them instead a bundle of dirty rags, without shoes, yes, and often without homes. It does not give us so much anxiety in Central Africa thanks to the stringent measures put into operation by the Government of the country, but in other portions of the Mission Field it is our deadliest foe. The steamer which took us out had about fifty large barrels of rum on deck and they seemed to stand looking at us every time we left the saloon to get a little fresh air, as though they would defy all our attempts to do good. Our fellow passengers felt

far more comfortable sitting before a whiskey bottle than taking part in a religious service. But bad as these things were, we expected to leave them all behind when we started from Calabar for our Mission up the river. Alas ! our hopes were vain, for a few days' residence in Archibongville brought vividly before us the degrading effects of this demon drink. I will give you two cases out of the many we witnessed there. It was an awfully dark night, no moon, no stars. We heard someone shouting on the Mission premises, and then suddenly a loud crash on the back door ; rushing to the spot we saw two men confronting each other with long knives drawn and eyes flashing like fire, they were without the least bit of clothing, and evidently intent on a dangerous fight. They had been drinking heavily during the day, and this was the result. I hope, my dear readers, you will never gaze on such a sight as that. It is bad enough to see a drunken white man, but a black man in his native element with the drink fire coursing through every vein, is a sight never to be forgotten. The other case was that of a man who had lost all self-control, the drink was his besetting sin, and he fell a victim to it again and again, we had reasoned with him, but all to no purpose. I was out one night enjoying the cool of the evening when I came across him lying helpless upon the ground. Calling a few natives to the spot, I had him carried home, and the next day he was in a raging fever. There were no public houses and no granting of Licences, for everybody was free to sell both night and day, Sunday included. Is it not sad that the same gallant little vessel

that bears the Missionary and the Gospel which is to bless and uplift men, also carries that blighting and degrading curse of the human race, drink. Stanley, when crossing Central Africa, in search of Livingstone, said, "I knew I was in the track of a holy man of God, for almost the first question with which the Chiefs would greet me was, "What news have you brought us from above," but when I approached the West Coast where the influence of the drink was felt, the question was, "How much rum and gin and spirits have you brought to dash us with?" The late Bishop Crowther made a piteous appeal to this country to stop the introduction of spirits to the West Coast. he said that the bush paths from the Coast into the interior were marked off with gin bottles, placed on end. Several tribes will soon become extinguished unless the present rate of traffic in drink is stopped. I hope all my readers are Total Abstiners, so that in the days to come we can form a mighty crusade against the liquor traffic and forbid it entering any British territory. Khama, one of the great Chiefs of South Africa, has done noble service for his black brother in standing out so boldly for the cause of Temperance. The rising generation is bringing many African Khamas to the front, they are already in training, and will soon be on the war path. Up with your hands for Jesus, and pure water, raise your loudest voices for truth and temperance. The evil is a powerful one, but it can be overcome.

"SLAVERY."

This is another great evil which stands in the

path of the Missionary. A large proportion of the population around our Mission centres on the West Coast belong to the slave class. Slavery is not altogether stopped. True it is not the old kind of slavery we read about in Uncle Tom's Cabin, when for a little offence a master would tie up a poor slave and have him flogged to death, they dare not be so strict as that now. Still, it is slavery. Far up the rivers slave markets were held, and at certain times some of our Chiefs would go and purchase perhaps half a dozen at a time and then bring them down to the town to work for them on the Yam farms. Bright eyed little boys and girls have thus been separated from fathers and mothers, never to see them again. Sometimes I have stood watching them in the evening as they have been returning from the farms with heavy loads upon their heads, and the little hymn I sang in childhood days came back to me with far more meaning than it had then—

“ I was not born a little slave,
To labour in the sun ;
Wishing I were but in my grave,
And all my labour done.”

Now if the masters of these slaves were not on friendly terms with the Mission and its Missionary, they would contrive to find them work on the farms during the Sabbath. Almost every Sunday some would be coming from their work whilst the evening service was proceeding, and the pitiful glances they cast through the open windows made our hearts ache for them. Happily, the great majority of our Chiefs attended the services themselves, and also brought their slaves with them.

“SUPERSTITION.”

This is another evil which causes us a great deal of anxiety. The meaning I give to the word superstition here is :—a certain belief that many foolish things possess a power which is either working for good or evil upon us. There was a large old tree near our Mission House, and it was called by the natives their “Sacred tree,” under it they have settled many quarrels and ended many palavers. It was in our way, for it obstructed a good view of the river. We wanted it down, but the people declared if we touched it they would run away. One day a native was accusing another of stealing some cloth from him ; he strongly denied it, when the injured man ran off to a Chief’s house and brought out a juju—as much as we could see of it, it consisted of shells, bones, hair and the small horns of a goat—he placed it before the thief and then repeated the words, “You have stolen my cloth,” and immediately the thief replied, “Yes, I have.” If they speak an untruth before the juju they believe it will cause their speedy death. Then there are trials by lottery, and the unfortunate man on whom the lot falls, is chased up and down the town and disgraced before all the people, even though he be innocent. Over the graves where important persons are buried, sticks were set up and afterwards that was regarded as a sacred spot. All the things belonging to a dead man were thrown into his grave so that he could use them in the other world. Little children came to school with shells, beads, bits of bone and stick tied on various parts of the body, these were supposed to act as charms.

When they were sick, the face and head were marked all over with a white substance resembling chalk, this was done to stop the progress of the disease. We had living with us at the Mission House the little son and heir of the Prince, and when his mother brought him he had some red string tied round his legs near the ankles, and it seemed to be cutting into his flesh. We asked her what it was there for, and she said it was to keep him from getting crawl-crawl. As we were having chop one day with a Chief, he would be served first so as to drive away the witches from the food. Now such foolish beliefs as these are obstacles in the way of the Gospel, they are evils which must be overcome, and friends at home can help us to overcome them. When the Israelites fought that great battle with the Amalekites, Moses was praying for them with hands uplifted, and the result was a mighty victory on their side. Now we want you so to pray for the Missionary. Ask God to help him in his arduous work, and do not be impatient to get a reply. He will perhaps not send it to you, He will waft it across the waters to the Missionary in the dark land, and his heart will be gladdened with a harvest of sheaves. One morning a Missionary in Africa sat down to breakfast, and his wife who sat opposite to him observed a change in his look and manner, he had been depressed for some time, the work was so difficult, he could see no results of his toil and sacrifice, but as he sat down at the table he said, "I feel very buoyant this morning, they are praying for me in the Homeland." It was true, when the mail arrived there were letters from two Christian Endeavour Societies, stating that the Members of

these Societies had been making his Mission a matter of special prayer. A notorious West African King who cruelly tortured and put to death some white people, was taken prisoner and brought down to Sierra Leone. I was returning home on furlough and saw him just after his arrival. I saw him again when I went out for a second term, and I was surprised at the remarkable change that had taken place in him. They told me he was a regular attendant at the Church Services, and he was taking the greatest interest in the study of the Bible. What had brought about this change? I will tell you. The good Bishop of Sierra Leone sent a request to Christian workers in this country that they would pray for the salvation of this heathen King, and they prayed, and it was the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous. God heard their prayer, and sent the answer to Sierra Leone. The prayers of God's people will bring about the fulfilment of His promises and save the world.

CONCLUSION.

Let me pay a tribute of respect and sincere affection to my co-workers with whom I laboured side by side in the Mission Field. The dangers, privations and sufferings of a Missionary's life; the loneliness and isolation he has to endure, and the prolonged estrangement from home and kindred, make the comradeship of his brethren sweet and beautiful. I shall always cherish fond memories of the fellowship, sympathy and brotherly kindness shown to me by the following, who have done so much and made such great sacrifices for Primitive

Methodism in the dark Continent of Africa—

Revs. N. Boocock, T. C. Showell, G. E. Wiles,
W. N. Barleycorn, R. Banham, W. J. Ward, W.
Chapman, E. W. Smith, J. Nicholls, and M. Holmes.

The End.

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